

Surrey Beekeepers Association

CROYDON DIVISION

Chairman Mark Stott 0208 684 1098
Treasurer Tamar Cavett 0208 406 9258
Secretary Joyce Atkinson 0208 657 2817

www.croydonbeekeepers.co.uk



MAY 2011



A Hamlet Home.



May Day

APIARY MEETINGS

MAY- 8 th. and 22 nd. Sundays at 2-30 p.m.

SURREY COUNTY SHOW

Enclosed with the posted edition of this month's newsletter is a schedule of classes with entry form for the honey part of the show.

I have copies of this so for those on the e-mail list let me know if you want one, 01737 822394

SOUTH OF ENGLAND SHOW

JUNE 9 - 11 at ARDINGLY, SUSSEX

Another opportunity for you to show your hive products.

Schedules and entry forms :-

Audrey Gill, 143, Smallfield Road, Horley, Surrey, RH6 9LR

e - mail : beelady@btinternet.com

FOUNDATION

David Shepherd attended the Stoneleigh Conference and has produced his report on the event which also appears in this edition. Whilst there he exchanged some wax for foundation, more than is required for our apiary, so if you want some let him know.

B.S. deep and shallow wired only available.

EQUIPMENT

Remember that Richard Palmer can supply any other sizes of foundation and anything else you or your bees may need for the season.

WILLIAM TALBOT CLEGG - 1919 - 2011

Talbot, as he was known, may not be remembered by many of members since he and his wife Hilda left Croydon in 1988. Our earliest record is of his joining our division in 1975 and he became quite involved in the running of our affairs being a visiting adviser, committee member and chairman for 1986 and 1987. Little is known of him prior to settling at Coulsdon other than that he had served in the RAF during the last war and worked for Philips Electrical maintaining hospital equipment. When he and his wife, Hilda, who worked as a BT supervisor, left Croydon they lived and continued bee keeping near Winfrith, Dorset but kept in touch with Croydon, receiving a copy of our newsletter until very recently. Later they moved to Seaton, Devon and in both counties they also had helpful friends, Ralph and Diana Holder, other ex Croydon beekeepers who moved to Devon around the same time and helped Talbot and Hilda when they became rather frail. Hilda died on the 18 th. January last and Talbot the 6 th. April, besides annual donations to our divisional funds, Surrey beekeeping has benefited from the Talbots will. Should any readers of this be able to add anything more please let me know.

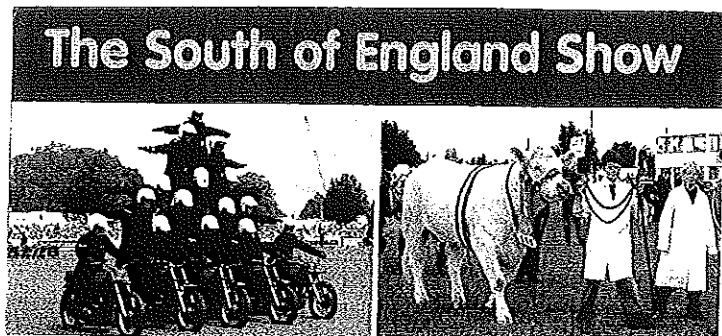
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Most of our active members know who is in our committee but so you may know who does what and might be best to contact if you have any questions the following is the first of a summery of the current committee members.

Rosemary Collett.

I was born at Mappowder, a village in the heart of Dorset and have three sisters. My father was a dairy farmer until his death in 1986 and I helped with getting the cows in for milking, feeding calves and generally. At Weymouth College I trained at typing and shorthand then worked for the local farm agents and auctioneers, Senior and Godwin who ran the livestock market, at one time this was the largest calf market in the country. I joined the WRAF at 18 and after training as a teleprinter served at Sandwich, Kent then Changi, Singapore. Upon demob I worked as a bookkeeper for Haskins Bros. whose firm later became Hobby Craft and after as train enquiry clerk at Bournemouth Railway Station.

In 1963 I emigrated to New Zealand by sea, through the Panama Canal and across the Pacific. After a spell as secretary at The Wool Research Institute, two years later I took a course at Wellington Polytechnic to qualify as a teacher of commercial practice, then found a post at Southland College, Invercargill. After two years I became homesick so decided to return to England but not directly. On the way back I had a job at a firm of patent agents in Sydney, a coach trip to the Australian outback, then to South Africa as I had an aunt and friend in Johannesburg so I found a job in the council offices for a few months before finally getting home. Another secretarial job in London then marriage with settlement in Croydon and the start of beekeeping in 1974, later involving being on the committee in various posts. Currently I am Croydon's trustee for the Surrey BKA with the duty to ensure that the association's funds and activities are used only for purposes allowed by the Charities Commissioners following their revision of regulations a few years ago. Thus I attend both the Croydon committee and Surrey Council meetings to keep informed of activities, both beekeeping and financial in the county so the job is fairly onerous. I would like to retire from this post in a year or so if any of you feel able to take over I can let you know what is involved.



9, 10 & 11 June Open from 9am to 6pm

The biggest and best Show for all the family
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ARDINGLY, WEST SUSSEX

www.southofenglandshow.org.uk

News from the Hartley Down Apiary

After a very cold winter, with temperatures down to over 7 degrees below freezing, the hives in the apiary survived well and apart from one colony which we have merged, the Divisional hives are now building efficiently. We had to make a few visits to lift snow away from the hive entrances to ensure that ventilation was not compromised and had to wade through deep snow to cut back snow laden branches that were resting on top of a couple of hives.

Woodpecker damage first appeared in the apiary last year. But this year they must have been quite hungry because at least 5 hives were attacked before we noticed (and then of course we rapidly 'wired up'). In one of the members' hives the hole was big enough for the bird to reach inside and make a complete mess of the frames (and the cluster) inside – although we quickly plugged the hole, the colony failed to survive. Woodpeckers quickly learn where there is grub to be had in hard times, so if you have hives at Hartley Down, you must take steps to protect your hives next winter – those of us with WBC hives may not feel that this is so much of a threat.

Another visitor to the apiary in early spring was the Roe deer: leaves of spring bulbs were nibbled and two of the young trees that we had planted a couple of summers ago were 'barked'. A neighbour reported that he had seen them for several days having a quiet undisturbed feast amongst the hives.

There is much talk about restoring *Apis mellifera mellifera* (European Black or Brown bee) which is our indigenous European sub-species which has lost favour over the last century to *Apis mellifera ligustica* (the Italian bee) and other strains of bee. Of course all of our bees at the apiary and most local bees are mongrels with varying degrees of inheritance. It is a well known fact that colonies imported as well behaved bees (meek and mild, good honey producers etc. etc.), will re-queen and mate with local mongrels to produce aggressive bees – the precise reason for this is not known but one possible explanation is that various sub-species have different 'dialects' with respect to pheromones and forms of communication; another is that hybrid vigour produces 'defensive' aggressiveness as a desirable characteristic for competition and survival.

Either way we certainly DON'T want aggressive bees. What it boils down to is that locally we need to breed our own bees, become proficient at queen rearing and the production of nucleus colonies. That way we can try to produce colonies that are gentle, well behaved, hardy, disease resistant and adapted to local conditions. It is not easy, none of us is expert but we're having a go. Watch this space and hopefully we will have some good news.

**Surrey
County Show** UP TO **35%**
DISCOUNT
ON ADVANCE TICKETS



**BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY
30th MAY 2011**

Stoke Park, Guildford, 8am-6pm



Reg. Charity No. 293515

Best value community event in the county

Stoneleigh - April 2011

This was my third trip to the National Conference at the National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Warwickshire. This year I attended the Members' Day on Friday and the 'Trade' Day on the Saturday.

A discourse on feeders and feeding was given in the restaurant on the Friday: having managed to find myself sitting in an armchair I tried hard not to nod off after my two and half hour drive that morning. However I sat through all the different versions of contact feeder, the millar feeder, brother adam feeder, ashforth feeder, frame feeders, ad finitum; the idea that appealed to me most was the washing up bowl with a floating pizza base within a super. In the past I used upturned, holed honey tubs but somehow the washing up bowl seems to appeal to me more.

An ex-city financier recently turned bee farmer, gave his view on the 'future of beekeeping'. He pointed out that we must remember that Beekeeping is just as prone to the influences of fashion as the rest of society. Polythene hives – will they catch on? Will we all soon be breeding 'English Black Bees', 'Super Italians' or highly productive 'killer bees' from the USA? I'm told there are beekeepers who are quite happy to work with them, - thank goodness I'm not living next door! With the sudden boom in beekeeping sales, will we have a glut of second hand equipment available in 10 years? How many of us will be converted to 'natural' or 'slow' beekeeping?

We are all familiar with the 'Bee Dance' and the painstaking work done by Karl von Frisch in the first half of the 20th Century. Well, German bee research tradition still continues into bee behaviour and I was absolutely riveted by two presentations given by Mario Pahl who is working at University of Canberra and at Würzburg University under Professor Juegen Tautz.

They had had bees flying through tunnels and mazes; had 'kidnapped' bees in Australia, driven them up to 9 km from the hive and timed them to see which ones and how many arrived back at the hive. Even though they can detect magnetism they do not use it to navigate; they detect polarised light from the sun (even when cloudy) and use horizon recognition; they have internal clock mechanisms, measure distance by 'optical flow' and energy consumption. Bees have navigation problems flying above large expanses of water and would rather fly around ponds and lakes to get home. Amazing they can count up to 3 and even more amazingly can recognise human faces (but not if both faces are upside down).

The Honey Dance is done in total darkness on the 'Dance Floor', near the entrance in an area of comb devoid of brood and food. The reason that comb is removed from the bottom of the frame is not for reasons of access but to increase the resonance of the dance vibrations on the comb – the duration of the 'wiggle' vibrations are logged with the workers' internal clocks.

The highlight of the trade day on the Saturday was the huge queue of folk waiting to get in at 8.45pm; the 200 yards I had to carry over 50 lbs of wax for the foundation exchange (it felt like half a mile) – and back to the car; the smithy that was making hive branding irons for £39.

There were so many people in the trade areas it was 'London Underground in the rush hour' all racing to get their 'special offer'. I chatted with beekeepers from Devon, Berkshire, Hertfordshire and more; a few Divisions had organised club weekends, some in matching sweatshirts with logos.

It's certainly worth going – I'll be back next year.